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United States Senate

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June 4, 1998

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Mr. Rory O'Rourke
7 Cedar Ct.
Jackson, New Jersey 08527

Dear Mr. O'Rourke:

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns regarding the latest developments with the tobacco industry. I share your interest in this issue and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

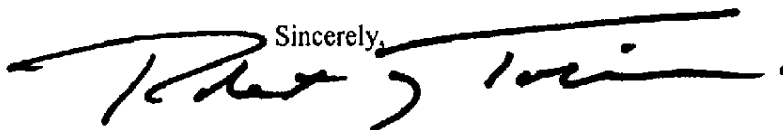
I am deeply concerned with the effect that smoking is having on the public's health, especially among children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reported that cigarette smoking rose among high school students from 27.5 percent in 1991 to 36.4 percent in 1997. Tobacco-related diseases kill more than 400,000 people a year in the United States and is directly responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer cases and causes most cases of emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Still, more than 3,000 adolescents every day smoke their first cigarette. One third of these new smokers will eventually die of tobacco-related diseases.

The Senate Commerce Committee recently approved S. 1415, the Universal Tobacco Settlement Act that, among its provisions, requires that tobacco companies curb advertising and includes significant fines if teenage smoking rates do not decrease significantly. This legislation would also seriously discourage teenage smoking by requiring a raise in the price of cigarettes by \$1.10 per pack. The United States Treasury Department recently reported that the increase in the cost of cigarettes will reduce teenage smoking by 30% to 40%. In addition, the legislation would grant \$28.5 billion in tobacco farmer subsidies and deny the tobacco industry many of the legal immunities originally granted to them in the original tobacco agreement.

S. 1415 will soon be debated by the full Senate and please be assured that I will keep your thoughts in mind as this debate moves forward.

Again, thank you for alerting me to your concerns, and please keep in touch.

Sincerely,



ROBERT G. TORRICELLI
United States Senator

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